

### ADA Statement

Since 1950, the ADA has unreservedly endorsed the fluoridation of community water supplies as safe, effective, and necessary in preventing tooth decay.

### CDC Statement

CDC has recognized the fluoridation of drinking water to prevent dental decay as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over the past 60 years, optimal fluoridation of community drinking water has been a major factor for the decline in rates of tooth decay.

### U.S. Surgeon General Statement

“Community water fluoridation continues to be the most cost-effective, equitable and safe means to provide protection from tooth decay in a community. A person’s income level or ability to receive routine dental care is not a barrier to receiving fluoridation’s health benefits. Water fluoridation is a powerful strategy in our efforts to eliminate differences in health among people and is consistent with my emphasis on the importance of prevention.” Vice Admiral Richard Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S., 2004.

Nature’s Way to Prevent Tooth Decay

# Water Fluoridation



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topics/fluoridation.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/topics/fluoridation.htm)

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**ADA**  
American Dental Association  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)



# Fluoridation:

Nature's way to prevent tooth decay



## Here's Why:

Fluoride is a natural element found in rocks and soil everywhere, in fresh water, and in ocean water. In fact, waters in and around the United States have natural fluoride levels that range from 0.1 to more than 12 parts per million. The optimal level for preventing tooth decay is a range from .0.7 to 1.2 parts per million.

Some communities are lucky enough to have naturally occurring optimal levels of fluoride in their water supplies. However, most are not. Adjusting the fluoride to an optimal level in the water supplies of these communities can help prevent tooth decay. Thousands of communities worldwide have reduced rates of tooth decay and improved oral health among their residents through water fluoridation.

Studies have shown that water fluoridation can reduce the amount of decay in children's teeth by as much as 60%. Today, even with the widespread use of fluoride toothpaste, mouth rinse, and professional fluoride treatments, fluoridation has been shown to reduce tooth decay by 18-40% among children and by nearly 35% among adults.

Over 405 million people in approximately 60 countries enjoy the benefits of optimally fluoridated water. In the United States, approximately 170 million people (about two-thirds of the population on public water systems) benefit from fluoridation.

**Fluoridation is safe.** More than 60 years of research and experience have shown that fluoridation at optimal levels does not harm people or the environment. Leading scientists and health professionals, numerous professional organizations, and governments around the world support community water fluoridation.

The ADA works with state and local dental societies and community coalitions to increase the number of communities that benefit from community water fluoridation.

The United States Public Health Service (PHS), also recommends community water fluoridation as a means of preventing dental decay. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) works with state and local health departments and water districts to help ensure that this health benefit is delivered safely and effectively to the American public.

**Fluoridation benefits everyone.** Every year, many city councils, health boards, water boards, and voters take action to fluoridate their water supply. You can too. Community leaders have come to realize that fluoridation benefits their entire community—children, adults, and senior citizens. Community water fluoridation does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of income, education, or race. Simply by drinking fluoridated water, everyone in a community benefits, especially those who don't receive regular dental care.

**Fluoridation is cost-effective.** The average cost for a community to fluoridate its water is estimated to range from approximately \$0.62 a year per person in large communities to approximately \$3.90 a year per person in small communities (2004 dollars). Over a lifetime this is typically less than the cost of one dental filling to repair one decayed tooth. Remember, when it comes to the costs of treating dental disease, everyone pays. Not just those who need treatment, but all of us—through higher health insurance premiums and higher taxes. For most cities, every \$1 invested in community water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs. Through fluoridation, communities can improve the oral health of their residents and save money for all of us.

### The key points to remember about water fluoridation are these:

- Fluoridation is safe.
- Fluoridation of community water supplies benefits everyone.
- Fluoridation is cost-effective because it saves money on dental treatment needs.

You can obtain further information about community water fluoridation by calling your dentist or local or state health department.